

FATHER PAT MONUMENT



Heritage Register – Site

- 1) **Historical Name:** Father Pat Monument
- 2) **Common Name:**
- 3) **Location:** In front of 2071 Columbia Avenue
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1902
- 5) **Architect:** J. J. Honeyman

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Description:

The Father Pat Monument is located on a sidewalk bump-out on the southwest corner of Columbia Avenue and Queen Street. It is a massive drinking fountain made of granite and marble with a base approximately 5 feet by 5 feet by 5 feet beneath a central obelisk rising above for a total height of 14 feet.

Heritage Value:

The Father Pat Monument honours Henry Irwin, an Anglican minister known affectionately as “Father Pat,” who served the community of Rossland from 1896 to 1899. It is valued because it perpetuates the memory of a man who was held in high esteem, by all Rossland citizens, for his tireless and caring efforts on their behalf. In early 1902, when news came back to Rossland of his death, a public subscription was immediately started and a committee formed to find the best way to recognize and honour Father Pat for his contributions to the community. The *Rossland Miner* provided coverage of all the deliberations and progress leading to the final decisions. The monument was constructed in September of 1902 and an ambulance purchased for use at the mines.

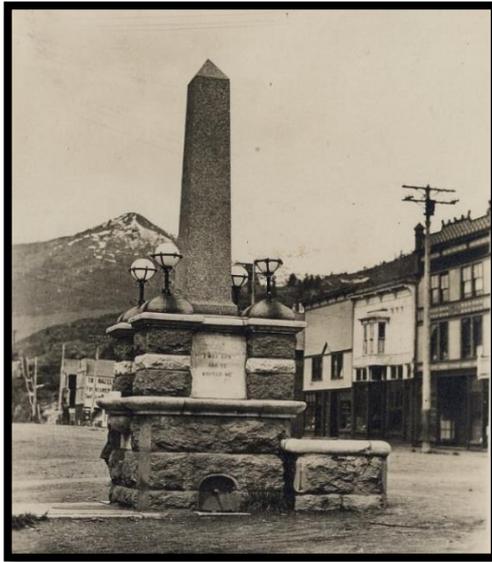
Father Pat’s humanitarianism is conveyed through four panels of inscriptions and the fact that the monument itself is a drinking fountain, providing separate places for people, horses and dogs to drink.

Designed by the Rossland architect, J. J. Honeyman, it is distinctive in its use of Rossland granite and Kaslo marble, two West Kootenay mineral resources. The four corner globe lights were lit by electricity.

The monument continues to be valued by Rosslanders. It has been moved twice because of development issues but remains a prominent feature of the downtown.

Character Defining Elements:

- Size and height.
- Building materials of granite and marble.
- Dog trough, horse trough and faucet.
- Corner globe lights, electrified.
- Inscriptions on granite slabs (originally marble).



Father Pat Monument c. 1910

HISTORY

The Father Pat Monument is an impressive stone monument dedicated to the memory of Henry Irwin, an Irish Anglican minister, who served the community of Rossland so selflessly from January of 1896 to November of 1899. Despite his short tenure in Rossland, when Rosslanders heard of his death on January 3, 1902 a committee was formed to see to a fitting disbursement of the funds collected in order to perpetuate his memory.

The monument, designed by J. J. Honeyman, was described in the *Rossland Miner* newspaper of Sunday, September 7, 1902,

"...to be built of Rossland granite and Kaslo marble, ...the two stones will make a pleasing contrast, the blue grey of the granite being relieved by moulded string courses and tablets in the almost pure white color of the marble. The memorial is in the shape of an obelisk on a massive stone base, flanked by four corner pedestals... On the north side of the monument is a drinking trough for horses, and on the south side

a drinking fountain, the faucet being in the shape of a lion's head fitted in the center of a marble tablet, with the appropriate text, "I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink," inscribed around same.

Father Pat was born in Ireland in 1859. During his years in school and college, he competed in football and boxing and enjoyed hiking and horseback riding. These pursuits toughened him and prepared him for the challenges of frontier living. His dream of becoming a missionary was realized when he was appointed to a post in Kamloops, B.C. From there he served in several other small communities until he arrived in Rossland in 1896.

There are many stories told of Father Pat's time in Rossland: how he took his sermons to the bars, demanding attention; how he wasn't hesitant to use his fine boxing skills learned at Oxford to "communicate"; how he mingled with the miners over drink and with camaraderie; how his bed was often given over to those in need; and his tireless care for the needy, the poor and the rejected.

Although his health was affected by his dedication to service, in 1899, he felt he should move on. "Rossland had become too civilized" and he wanted to go somewhere where he was needed more desperately.

He chose to go to Fairview, a rough mining camp in BC's interior. His stay there was short. By this time, he was physically and mentally exhausted and his Bishop convinced him to go home to Ireland for a period of rest. It was on this trip home that Father Pat died in Montreal at the age of 42.

Father Pat undoubtedly had the respect of all Rosslanders in the earliest days of the community's development, regardless of their religious affiliations. This is demonstrated by the wide support for creating a lasting memorial for him. Added to this, when St. George's Anglican Church was built across from the courthouse in 1910 to replace the old church, it was dedicated to Henry Irwin, "Father Pat."

Inscriptions on the Father Pat Monument:

- "I WAS THIRSTY AND YE GAVE ME DRINK"
- "I WAS SICK AND YE VISITED ME"

- "IN MEMORIAM – FATHER PAT- HE THAT WOULD WRITE AN EPITAPH FOR THEE AND DO IT WELL, MUST FIRST BEGIN TO BE SUCH AS THOU WERT; FOR NONE CAN TRULY KNOW THY WORTH, THY LIFE, BUT HE THAT HATH LIVED SO"
- "IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE REV. HENRY IRWIN M. A. – FIRST RECTOR OF ST. GEORGES CHURCH, ROSSLAND – FAMILIARLY KNOWN AS FATHER PAT. JAN. 13, A.D. 1902. CHRIST'S LOVE AND HIS APOSTLES TWELVE HE TAUGHT, BUT FIRST HE FOLLOWED IT HIMSELVE"

MOVING THE MONUMENT:

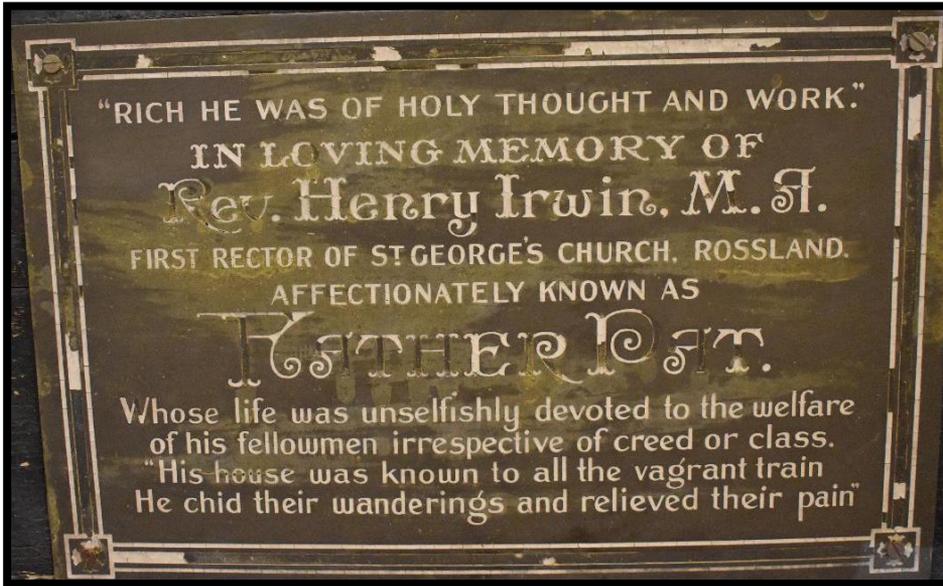
The Father Pat Monument was erected on the road allowance of Columbia Avenue, on the corner of Washington Street across from the Bank of Montreal in the fall of 1902. At some point it was moved to Esling Park on Spokane Street, a park that was developed in the 1920s. In 1997 the Monument was relocated again, to Columbia Avenue but this time on the corner of Queen Street where it stands today.



Reverend Henry Irwin "Father Pat" – 1896

Ambulance Purchased in Remembrance of Father Pat

As mentioned above, besides building the monument to Father Pat, an ambulance for the mines was purchased with the proceeds raised in his memory. The ambulance can be seen in the Rossland Museum and Discovery Centre and it bears two plaques.



Plaque on Father Pat Ambulance